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BRIEF REMARKS

UPON

The Rev. Mr. HARWOOD's

LATE EXTRAORDINARY

LETTER.

By CALEB EVANS.

Depingo vobis, viri dignissimi, vitium a perpaucis observatum, ideoque maximè periculosum. CALUMNIA est; pestis linguarum fœda et perniciosa; quippè ex pessimis in optimos plerumque cadit, inexpectatò vulnerat. Cui vero grata? Vilissimis, ignavis, loquacibus. A qua verò origine provenit? A mendacio patre, invidia matre. Nec ipsa quidem sterilis est; jurgia enim, et odia, non gignit solum, sed fovet. Quenam verò huic morbo antidotus? INNOCENTIA et patientia; hæc enim tolerat, illa bebetat.-----Justus Lipsius.

B R I S T O L.

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BRIEF REMARKS, &c.

LAST week was publish'd, price 1s. only, the author, (see p. 47 of his letter) *being infinitely above secular considerations, and coveting no man's money*;---A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Caleb Evans, occasioned by his curious confession of faith, at his late ordination among the Independent Baptists in Bristol: In which his marvellous creed is consider'd, and his abusive censures of other ministers and churches are exposed. Being a seasonable rebuke to an uncharitable baptist. By E. Harwood.

THIS

THIS letter, I am sorry to be oblig'd to say it, is a mere farrago of *falsehood*, *misrepresentation*, and the most *illiberal abuse*. It has rather the appearance of the foam of insanity, than the remonstrance of christian sobriety. In full proof of which I appeal to the letter itself, and to my Confession which occasioned it.---To pretend to reply to such a scurrilous libel, which can injure no one but its miserable and much to be pity'd author, would be a shameful waste of time, and an insult upon the public, who do not need to be told with what contempt such a production ought to be treated. I might perhaps afford some diversion to the infidel and libertine, was I to sit down and imitate the polite liberal style of my Rev. correspondent, and to address him as familiarly as he condescends to address me. It might very possibly raise a laugh if I was to insert such a passage as this, see p. 8, of the Letter. "I seized your letter with the utmost eagerness, transported with the

the fond delusive thought that my *Ned* had surely by this time, changed the fury and ferocity of the ungovernable *bigot*, for the mildness and meekness of the christian." Or, having animadverted upon some of the curious anecdotes my correspondent has thrown out, if I was to close a paragraph with such a beautiful exclamation as this, it would be very witty to be sure. See p. 14, of the letter. "Indeed *Ned* you are a conjurer!" Tho' in good truth I should rather say, *indeed Ned* you are *no* conjurer. Or perhaps it might be thought very diverting, if I was to embellish another page with such a polite sentence as this ; which is highly season'd with the urbanity of the gentleman, the scholar and the christian minister. See p. 39, of the letter. "Ned, you might as well attempt to blow the sun from his heavens, the moon from her orb, and the brightest star from its sphere with the nozzle of a bellows, as wipe" ----- I leave the public to compleat the sentence, and Mr.

Harwood's

Harwood's own conscience to tell *him*, what needs to be wip'd. But however I might hereby raise a laugh upon my adversary, I cannot descend thus low; or help blushing for the man, who sustaining the character of a christian minister, is yet capable of thus sinking every degree of clerical decorum into the very lowest and most ridiculous buffoonery. As an adversary I *despise* him; but as a weak unhappy man I have a heart to *pity* and *pray* for him.

WHETHER I have thrown out the least grain of abuse upon other ministers and other churches, and scolded like a fishwoman, as Mr. Harwood elegantly expresses it: Whether I claim any right of imposing my creed or system upon any one fellow christian, or plead for any such right on behalf of the society I am connected with: Whether I have given the least intimation that THE BIBLE is by no means sufficient, but is a very lax, incomplete, imperfect,

imperfect, unfinish'd book : Whether any of these things are true, as Mr. *Harwood* has asserted they are, appealing to the great God that he has no design to *misrepresent* any man's creed or character ;----I leave every impartial sober man that reads my confession of faith, to judge and determine.

I HAVE indeed mentioned as a reason why a society should be more careful in their choice of a minister, that the sentiments embrac'd by some professing christians are *decied* by others. I have also said that a minister's *making a declaration* of his belief in the bible in general, is by no means sufficient to satisfy a society, because this is a declaration which even a papist will make as well as a protestant ; and yet what protestant society would think themselves obliged to chuse a popish minister merely because he made such a declaration. I have also intimated that though it is become fashionable to inveigh against all
creeds

creeds and systems, yet, that 'tis very evident the grand rock of offence with these *specious declaimers*, for their declamations are plausible tho' not conclusive, is the calvinistic system, which I esteem the bulwark and glory of the reformation, but which they, being enemies to it, use every *artifice*, and this of crying out against *all* creeds in general is one, to overturn it.

IN short, all I have done is this. I have pleaded for a right of private judgment for myself and fellow christians. I have vindicated the society I serve in their exercise of this right. I have insisted upon it likewise, that no minister is oblig'd to declare by the rite of ordination, his approbation of a man he disapproves; a truth Mr. Harwood has had proof of. And lastly, I have deliver'd my own religious sentiments, suggesting the reasons of my belief of them as I go along, and conclude with an acknowledgment of my

my own imperfection weakness and fallibility, and my entire union of heart with all sincere christians of every denomination, whom I salute as brethren in the LORD.---And whether there is any thing in all this, that merits such illiberal abuse as Mr. Harwood hath thought proper to disgorge upon me and the society I serve upon account of it---Countrymen ! friends ! fellow-christians ! judge ye !

As to my sentiments, which have produced *such bursts of HOLY indignation* from Mr. Harwood, he well knows they are not novel ; and may perhaps remember the time when he himself deliver'd a written experience (as I have been inform'd) and join'd himself it is certain as a member to a church that patronizes these very sentiments infernal as they are, and the minister of which church hath publish'd a confession of his belief of them. They make indeed a strange figure as dress'd up by Mr. Harwood, but in

native dress they have no such formidable appearance. And methinks it should have been some check upon the fury of my Rev. antagonist, to have read (as doubtless he has read) the following candid acknowledgment in favour of Calvinism, in the celebrated Confessional. See p. 287, and 288, of the 2d edition. "One thing, however, I beg leave just to mention in favour of the *Calvinists*; namely, that some very eminent men of the present generation have gone a great way in their *philosophical disquisitions*, towards vindicating the predestinarian theology of these our forefathers. And, when it is consider'd that so able a writer as *Dr. Clayton*, the late bishop of *Clogher*, could find no other way of establishing the free-will or free-agency of man, but by putting such limitations, as he has done, upon the prescience of GOD, NO REASONABLE man would hastily conclude, that the *Calvinists* have nothing material to say for themselves."

AND

AND I should have thought his sublime veneration for *Arianism* might have been somewhat abated, by the sermons preach'd at Lady Moyer's lecture, and lately publish'd, by his learned and ingenious friend, as he affects to call Dr. *Dawson*, who in those discourses shews the inconsistency and absurdity of this motley scheme.

I HAVE only to add, that as christians of all denominations in this town, were perfectly peaceable, and liv'd in friendship with one another till Mr. Harwood came amongst us; so I flatter myself the same harmony will continue to subsist, notwithstanding the unworthy attempts of this man to disturb it.

FOR my own part, there is nothing I more fervently wish, next to the enjoyment of peace with God, than to live peaceably with all men.

BRISTOL, Nov. 9,
1767.

CALEB EVANS.

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